

HULL &
ASSOCIATES

The Corporate Communicator



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Consider This ...

Cooperation is
doing with a
smile,
what you have
to do anyway.



Why Team Building!

There are a lot of events that people call **Team Building**, but in reality they are Team Entertainment or Team Competition and typically they don't really build a team. When we conduct team building, our goal is to **bring people together and create a deeper understanding between coworkers** so that **coworkers like each other better and work better together than they did before.**

When you hold a competitive event, each side works to beat the other side, which typically further divides the group because you have winners and losers. That replicates what occurs in the workplace where your various components compete rather than cooperate. In addition, research has

shown that 31% of workers dislike such activities and only participate because they have to. This causes resentment, not engagement.

So what should you do? Each team is unique, and **we custom tailor experiences** where **all your people perform well together.** At the end of the program, everyone feels good about themselves and how they contribute to the team. By taking the learning that is done at the training and applying it to the workplace, **results are positive and long lasting.** In addition, people sense that their **time was used wisely** and look forward to additional opportunities to further build their team.



Don't Burn Them Out!!

Organizations are doing more with fewer people. Here are some tips to keep your employees motivated and insure that burnout does not occur.

A pay increase is not always the answer. Recognizing an employee's quality work, which has made a positive impact on the organization, can motivate employees. This helps them feel engaged and appreciated, and avoid burnout. **Make sure that your assignments and values are aligned.** Don't ask employees to do something that they (and you) know is wrong, inappropriate or possibly even illegal. This type of angst leads quickly to burnout!

Don't overload your employees. An overload of work may result in a decrease of productivity and become

an indicator that burnout is imminent. Check with your employees regularly, and if necessary lighten the workload by dispersing big tasks among multiple employees.

Let people know your priorities. If you have to add an assignment, let them know where it fits in the timeline compared to other duties.

Make a change. A change in assignment can breathe new life into an overwhelmed employee. For some, having a "change of pace" can result in increased enthusiasm and generate new and even better ideas to make the workplace function more smoothly.

Resolve conflicts quickly. Don't let conflicts fester. Often burnout occurs because employees are conflicted and no one is doing anything about the situation.

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How to Deal With Workplace Theft

Workplace theft is rampant. Stealing in the workplace can be as small as taking a couple of office supplies to as large as embezzlement. Here are some things to keep in mind when confronting theft at work.

People decide to steal from their employers due to a poor relationship with them. They feel that they have been taken advantage of and they are stealing to even the playing field not because they are in financial straits.

The typical employee that steals from the workplace isn't an amoral con artist. In reality the workplace thief is someone who is often well mannered, respected, and a dedicated employee. This is because they don't want to draw attention to themselves and risk getting caught.

Apprehending the offender takes time.

Depression: What Can Be Done at Work?

Last Newsletter, we discussed Depression and its symptoms in the workplace. Now, here's what you can do at work and how the workplace itself can be a support system.

Self-care takes priority. Work is important and so are you. If you find that you cannot complete a task, get professional help. Treatment is #1.

Talk to your boss. Ask if you are meeting your performance objectives and, if not, what you need to do to get back on track.

Resist being a perfectionist. Don't set yourself up to fail; accept your limits and adjust your workplace expectations. No one is perfect, and if your boss is saying you are doing fine, believe it.

Don't let the past define the present. If your symptoms once caused a problem, don't define yourself by that past instance. Focus forward and give yourself credit for current accomplishments.

Report a toxic environment. A short conversation with the appropriate people can go a long way. If you feel comfortable, express your desire to make the workplace a more depression-friendly

place. Monitor them closely. Should you decide to later terminate or have them charged, you will need documentation. List each piece of evidence, including physical evidence, witness testimony, security footage, financial documents, etc. Ask other employees to report any suspicious activity. Don't make an accusation until you're absolutely sure you have the evidence.

Employees who steal start and stop, often for months, and start again once their employer has relaxed and stopped watching them closely.

If it is a small offense and you don't want to fire an employee, meet with them and calmly explain the specifics. Have another person in the room with you. Keep a watchful eye on them and if the behavior continues, contact the proper authorities and terminate their employment.

place.

Reach out to others for help.

Management needs be aware of depression in the workplace. If you find your work environment is negatively affecting you, there are some options to how you can introduce depression initiatives to your office.

Talk to the Human Resources

Department. They may have or be able to initiate programs that are beneficial, like an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which could include depression assistance! Having a conversation with them about depression and how it affects the workplace may spur other initiatives.

Use outside resources! Places like MentalHealth.gov and Mental Health America provide resources for coping with depression both in and out of the workplace. If it is okay with your workplace, bring those resources in! Share them so everyone can learn about mental health.

Don't fight depression alone. If you need help immediately, call the Depression / Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).



Cross Cultural Relationships in the Workplace.

Cross cultural relationships play a big role in our ever more diverse organizations. Having healthy relationships promotes an efficient work environment where employees feel at ease with themselves and their coworkers. Here are some ways to help foster healthy intercultural relationships.

1. Treat people as individuals and as members of a culture. Someone may be a part of a specific culture and not adhere to all its beliefs and customs. Be respectful and mindful of their culture and beliefs without branding them.

2. Learn about the different cultures. People are willing to share information if they see you as caring. If they observe a cultural holiday, ask how it went or what they did for the occasion. Let them know that you appreciate the diversity they bring to the workplace.

3. Keep it simple. If English is a second language, use clear, common and concrete terminology. Don't ramble!

4. Recognize the same word can have a different meaning for people of another culture. Be careful using humor and avoid sarcasm, as it often doesn't translate well.

5. Be kind and respectful as you would with any other person. If they need help, offer assistance, if they're having an issue, listen to their predicament. Small gestures like listening without interrupting or just asking how their day is going shows that you care about them, not only as an employee but also as individuals. This can make a huge positive impact.

6. As with any employee, express concerns tactfully, directly, confidentially and constructively. This promotes your being seen an ally not an adversary.

Follow these tips and you will pave the way for a healthy cross cultural workplace.

(Adapted from a "Cross Cultural Communications Seminar," by Dr. Mimi Hull)

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Her most requested programs are in the areas of Communication, including Team Building, Leadership, Conflict Management and Board Development.

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 by
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

Sometimes I am in a position where I have to tell my boss bad news—and I dread it! In fact, I have been known to put it off, hoping things will get better. Rarely do they, and they often get worse! While she tells me that she has a strong need to know, I am aware that she gets really frustrated.

—*Bad News Bearer*

Dear Bearer:

Be sure to choose a quiet time and a confidential place to communicate what is happening. Try to be as unemotional as you can be. Describe the issue in detail and the impact or possible impact that it will have if left unattended. Hopefully, you have already attempted to fix the problem. If so, let her know what you have tried. If you have additional ideas, you might want to have an outline for her to see what that plan of action could be. If you were responsible for the bad event, accept the appropriate level of responsibility. If it is your responsibility to simply let her know what is happening, remind her that you are the messenger and to please not “shoot the messenger.”

—*Dr. Mimi*

Dr. Mimi Hull heads Hull & Associates, a team of trainers, speakers and consultants. A licensed psychologist, she has a master's in counseling and personnel services and a doctorate in psychology with specialization in business management from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Her B.A. in psychology is from Syracuse (N.Y.) University. Reach her at www.HullOnline.com or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.

 by
Dr. Mimi Hull

THE corporate couch

**Dear Dr. Mimi:**

I have an employee who is steadily going downhill. He never was a superstar, but he was a good “average” employee who arrived, did his work and went home. However, his work is now sloppy. He is complaining and, slowly but surely, becoming toxic. I keep hoping he will make a turn-around, but so far, there is no movement in the right direction. Help!

—*Annoyed*

Dear Annoyed:

Have you taken the time to speak to him and find out why there is such a change? Let him know how his work has declined. Show him specific examples of how his work was before and what it is like now. Ask him to share why this may be so. Some common reasons an employee's work will decline include feeling unappreciated, problems at home or simply being bored with their position. Ask him for suggestions on how he can get better and what you can do to support that effort. If he doesn't come up with answers immediately, ask him to think about it and come up with suggestions when you meet again in a week or so. You may find that by simply having the conversation, things will improve!

—*Dr. Mimi*

Dr. Mimi Hull heads Hull & Associates, a team of trainers, speakers and consultants. A licensed psychologist, she has a master's in counseling and personnel services and a doctorate in psychology with specialization in business management from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Her B.A. in psychology is from Syracuse (N.Y.) University. Reach her at www.HullOnline.com or DrMimi@HullOnline.com.